



May 4, 2007

Mr. Kenneth C. Robbins, President
Illinois Hospital Association
1151 East Warrenville Road
P.O. Box 3015
Naperville, IL 60566

Dear Mr. Robbins:

I am writing to offer the support of the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network (ICAHN) and our commitment to the efforts outlined in the application to be submitted to the Federal Communications Commission to request funds from the Rural Health Care Pilot Program. The availability of the funds will enable ICAHN to assist the Illinois critical access hospitals (CAHs) to expand their current technology capabilities and services. The funds will make provide technical assistance and enable CAHs to expand broadband connectivity internally as well as externally within the local community. As you are most aware, our Illinois CAHs do not have the financial and information technology resources to not only expand current capacity, but to take the lead within the rural community thereby electronically connecting other organizations and local health care providers all together.

We are aware that many Illinois hospitals and health care providers have embraced telehealth and other health information technologies. However, there has not been a centrally coordinated effort to link the efforts of individual hospitals, medical and other health professional education institutions, and medical specialty consultants, as examples, to most effectively capitalize on the benefits of the technologies to enhance access to and improve outcomes of health care for Illinois' rural and underserved residents. The increasing national focus on electronic health information and its immediate and secure availability for patient care offers another level of technology that complements current telehealth applications, especially remote health care services and distance learning.

The ICAHN membership is very pleased the Illinois Hospital Association is taking the lead on this project and making available additional grant funding for our rural hospitals and communities. Your organization has the necessary staff and expertise to assure these hospitals are integral in the electronic communication of health care information. ICAHN is pleased to be part of this telehealth effort.

Sincerely,
Pat Schou
Pat Schou, Executive Director

Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network